IN THE CLAIMS:

Cancel without prejudice Claims 16, 17 and 18.

1-8. (Cancelled)

9. (Currently Amended) An agglutination immunoassay method of quantifying a predetermined antigen in a sample of whole blood, comprising the steps of:

providing a sample of the whole blood;

adding a hemolysis reagent and a latex reagent comprising of insoluble latex carriers onto which antibodies specifically reacting with the predetermined antigen in the sample of whole blood have been immobilized, directly to the sample of the whole blood without any pre-treatment of the whole blood;

hemolysing the whole blood sample with the hemolysis reagent to hemolyse the blood corpuscles;

~~reacting the hemolysed whole blood sample in~~ forming ~~an agglutination reaction to form~~ a reaction ~~mixture~~ product wherein a predetermined antigen in the hemolysed whole blood sample specifically reacts with ~~an antibody~~ the antibodies immobilized onto ~~an~~ the insoluble ~~carrier~~ latex carriers;

irradiating the reaction products in the sample with radiation which ~~include~~ includes a wavelength within a range of 700 nm to 1000 nm which is substantially free from absorption by both hemoglobin and the hemolysis reagent; and

measuring, only in a the wavelength range which is substantially free from absorption by both hemoglobin and the hemolysis reagent, an absorbance of the incident radiation through the reaction mixture to determine the quantity of antigens in the sample.

10. (Cancelled)

11. (Currently Amended) The immunoassay method of Claim ~~10~~ 9, wherein the step of hemolysing is performed with a saponin aqueous solution as the hemolysis reagent.

12. (Cancelled)

13. (Currently Amended) An agglutination immunoassay method of quantifying a predetermined antigen in a sample of whole blood, comprising the steps of:

providing a sample of the whole blood;

adding a hemolysis reagent and a latex reagent, including insoluble latex carriers onto which antibodies specifically reacting with the predetermined antigen in the sample of whole blood have been immobilized, directly to the sample of the whole blood without any pre-treatment of the whole blood;

hemolysing the whole blood sample with the hemolysis reagent to hemolyse the blood corpuscles;

reacting the hemolysed whole blood sample in an agglutination reaction to form an agglutination reaction product wherein a predetermined antigen in the hemolysed whole blood sample specifically reacts with ~~an antibody~~ the antibodies immobilized onto ~~an~~ the insoluble ~~carrier~~ latex carriers;

irradiating the agglutination reaction product in the hemolysed whole blood sample with radiation which includes a wavelength within a range of 700 nm to 1000 nm which is substantially free from absorption by both hemoglobin and the hemolysis reagent; and

measuring, only ~~in a~~ within the wavelength range ~~which is free from absorption by both hemoglobin and the hemolysis reagent~~ of 700 nm to 1000 nm, an absorbance of the incident radiation with the agglutination reaction product to determine the quantity of antigens in the sample.

14. (Currently Amended) The agglutination immunoassay method of Claim 13 further including the step of determining the ~~CRP~~ C-reactive protein (CRP) component in plasma in the hemolysed whole blood sample.

15. (Currently Amended) The agglutination immunoassay method of Claim 13 wherein the wavelength ~~range~~ is approximately ~~at~~ 800 nm for measuring.

16-18. (Cancelled)

19. (Currently Amended) A particle agglutination immunoassay method of quantifying a predetermined antigen in a sample of whole blood, comprising the steps of:

providing a sample of the whole blood;

adding a hemolysis reagent to the sample of whole blood;

hemolysing blood corpuscles in the sample of whole blood to enable a subsequent immunoreaction;

adding a latex reagent, including insoluble latex carriers onto which antibodies specifically reacting with the predetermined antigen in the sample of whole blood have been immobilized, to the hemolysed whole blood;

providing an agglutination reaction with the hemolysed whole blood sample to form an agglutination reaction product of particles wherein a predetermined antigen in the

hemolysed whole blood sample reacts with the antibodies immobilized on the insoluble carrier particle to provide the agglutination reaction product;

irradiating the agglutination reaction product in the hemolysed whole blood sample with radiation which includes a wavelength of approximately 800 nm which is substantially ~~free~~ free from absorption by both hemoglobin and the hemolysis reagent; and

measuring, only with the wavelength of approximately 800 nm, a change in absorbance of the incident radiation by the agglutination reaction product to determine the quantity of antigens in the sample.

20. (Previously Presented) The particle agglutination immunoassay method of Claim 19 wherein the hemolysing reagent is saponin.

21. (Currently Amended) The particle agglutination immunoassay method of Claim 19 wherein the ~~measuring also determines CRP of plasma components~~ predetermined antigen is the C-reactive protein (CRP) composed in plasma in the hemolysed whole blood sample.

22. (Cancelled)

23. (Currently Amended) The immunoassay method of Claim 9 wherein the wavelength ~~range is at~~ approximately 800 nm.

24. (New) The agglutination immunoassay method of Claim 13 wherein the hemolysing reagent is saponin.